



# What is Climate Anxiety?

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Climate change is a global threat that exacerbates many other crises, and requires dramatic changes to mitigate its negative effects on society. The climate crisis impacts not only the environment but also our mental wellbeing. Climate anxiety is the "chronic fear of environmental doom," as defined by the American Psychological Association.

My job involves conversations about climate change every – single – day. While I am hopeful and optimistic for our world's future, I too experience climate anxiety because the sheer size of the problem can seem daunting and unmanageable.

Beyond the ecological, financial, and societal impacts of climate change, it is growing increasingly common for people to feel helpless and suffer real psychological impacts. Symptoms include panic attacks, insomnia, and obsessive thinking.

Climate anxiety is a new phenomenon affecting mostly young people, so there is limited data available for treating the condition. These feelings of climate distress can compound other daily stressors to impact overall mental health, and prolonged stress can negatively impact physical health as well. However, it is important to remember that no one person is responsible for our climate crisis, and no one person can solve it.

We are far from powerless. The single most effective thing to treat my climate anxiety is to talk to people about it, because in talking about the problem, we can find solutions. The great thing about sustainability work is that it crosses over into so many different sectors, allowing for many opportunities for people to take action and get involved in the areas about which they are particularly passionate.

The United Nations developed 17 goals for a more sustainable future:

- **No Poverty**
- **Industry Innovation & Infrastructure**
- **Zero Hunger**
- **Reduced Inequalities**
- **Good Health & Well-being**
- **Sustainable Cities & Communities**
- **Quality Education**
- **Responsible Consumption & Production**
- **Gender Equality**
- **Climate Action**
- **Clean Water & Sanitation**
- **Life Below Water**
- **Affordable & Clean Energy**
- **Life on Land**
- **Decent Work & Economic Growth**
- **Peace, Justice & Strong Institution**
- **Partnership for the Goals**

One cure for feeling helpless is to do something for the greater good. Volunteering is a wonderful way to treat climate anxiety. You can also reduce it by picking one aspect of sustainability that interests you most and do one thing about it. Just one thing can be the start to something big!

On the next page you will find a not-so-comprehensive list of organizations and programs in our community that help mitigate climate change impacts, protect our public health, and build a more resilient future.

Together, we can act on climate change. What will you choose to do?





# Local Environmental Groups & Green Initiatives

## (City of Gaithersburg, Maryland)

This list provides opportunities to build a better and more sustainable future for us all. Participating in environmental groups and other green initiatives helps address the global challenges we face, including clean water, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and environmental justice. Learn about, contribute to, advocate for, and invest in local solutions that improve not only Gaithersburg, but our entire planet.

### Climate Action & Affordable and Clean Energy

(Resilience Groups, Climate Planning, Energy Reduction, Carbon Footprint Mapping, Sustainable Solutions)

- [Gaithersburg Green Drinks](#)
- [My Green Montgomery](#)
- [Solar United Neighbors](#)

### Life Below Water

(Stream Monitoring, Trash Cleanup Events, Invasive Species Removal, Tree Plantings)

- [Muddy Branch Alliance](#)
- [Seneca Creek Watershed Partners](#)
- [Watts Branch Watershed Alliance](#)
- [Interfaith Partners of the Chesapeake](#)
- [Alice Ferguson Foundation](#)
- [Izaak Walton League of America](#)
- [Defensores de la Cuenca](#)

### Sustainable Cities & Communities

(Green Policy, Environmental Advocacy, Friends of Park Groups, Biking Paths, and Hiking Trails)

- [Gaithersburg Environmental Affairs Committee](#)
- [Gaithersburg Transportation Committee](#)
- [Gaithersburg Parks, Arts and Recreation Corp.](#)
- [Sierra Club](#)
- [Audubon Naturalist Society](#)
- [Friends of Seneca Creek State Park](#)
- [Citizen Climate Lobby](#)

### Life on Land

(Heathy Soils, Native Plants, Pollinators, Composting, Organic Lawncare)

- [Bee City Committee](#)
- [Gaithersburg's Rainscapes Rewards Program](#)
- [Izaak Walton League of America](#)
- [Master Gardener Program U of MD Extension](#)
- [Montgomery County Soil Conservation District](#)
- [Institute for Local Reliance](#)
- [Friends of Seneca Creek State Park](#)

### Quality Education

- [Educational Enrichment Committee](#)
- [SciTech2U](#)

### Zero Hunger

- [Community Advisory Committee](#)
- [Montgomery County Food Council](#)
- [Manna Food Center](#)
- [Gaithersburg HELP](#)

### Gender Equality & Reduced Inequalities

- [Montgomery County League of Women Voters](#)

### No Poverty, Decent Work and Economic Growth

- [Community Advisory Committee](#)
- [Economic & Business Development Committee](#)

### Local Green Neighborhood Groups & Partnerships for the Goals

- [Montgomery County Community Foundation](#)
- [Montgomery County Volunteer Center](#)
- Kentland's Go Green
- Saybrooke Green Team
- Diamond Farms/Hidden Creek Green Team
- St. Rosa Lima Green Team
- East Gaithersburg United



**Do you know of other local organizations or environmental initiatives that should be on this list?**

**Please e-mail  
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